Tells the Facts and Names the Names

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Their Masters' Voice

"We go to industry and we ask industry, 'What is it we can do to make your job easier and to help you in this competitive world we have,' rather than writing legislation and having industry comment on what we write."

— Rep. Dan Schaefer (R-Colorado), quoted in *Energy Daily*, March 31, 1995.

Give Me Your Stun Guns

Tales from the Torture Trade

Answering President Clinton's urgings to "compete and win in the global market place" are companies like Nova Technologies of Austin, Texas. But this is no world-wide "barn-raising", to use Clinton's bucolic imagery about the "information superhighway". Nova Technologies manufactures stun guns and exports its merchandise under the seal of approval of the Commerce Department, as does Premier Crown Corporation, maker of a 26-inch electric shock club with what the export license calls a "hot" center.

The list of such companies maintained by the Commerce Department is secret. The Department fears that export of torture devices might arouse public clamor, and conceals its supervision of this dirty business under the preposterous excuse that it is protecting "proprietary information". But our own researches, as well as material passed to us by the Federation of American Scientists, reveals that the United States has provided a host of repressive Third World regimes with "crowd-control" equipment that can be used to inflict torture.

A Freedom of Information Act request filed by the Federation found that between September of 1991 and December of 1993, the Commerce Department issued 350 licenses, worth up to $27 million, to companies exporting torture and police equipment. The licenses cover category 0A82C, which includes "saps, thumbcuffs, thumbscrews, leg irons, shackles, and handcuffs; specially designed implements of torture, straitjackets, plastic handcuffs, police helmets and shields; and parts and accessories".

Another 2,000 licenses, worth $117 million, were issued under category 0A84C. That grouping covers everything from electric shock batons and cattle prods to shotguns and shells.

Companies don't even need a license to export either 0A82C or 0A84C equipment to NATO countries — including Turkey and its torture-loving police and armed forces. The Commerce Department's "Export Administration Annual Report" for 1994-1995 states that for other countries, applications for licenses "will generally be considered favorably, on a case-by-case basis, unless there is evidence that the government of the importing country may have violated internationally recognized human rights". The Federation's Lora Lumpe tells **CounterPunch** that "by bundling controversial items (like thumbscrews) together with non-controversial ones (like helmets) into broad categories, Commerce effectively frustrates public oversight".

The Commerce Department refuses to say precisely what equipment it approves for sale abroad, claiming that this is "proprietary information" of the companies involved. Mark Hanshaw, a Commerce spokesman, claims that most of the licenses the Department grants are for shotguns, and fingerprint and polygraph equipment. "The vast majority of items exported are for legitimate police purposes, just like the folks in our country might find it necessary to use [such equipment] under certain circumstances", he warbled reassuringly to **CounterPunch**. "The situation is rather benign if you look at the actual facts."

But we have in our possession a secret list of licenses issued by the Commerce Department which stretches back for the last decade — a list denied to Lumpe's Freedom of Information Act request.

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The Croat in Dole's Offcice

What nation, without a word of reporting, comment, or rebuke from the media:

- rallied to the cause of a documented anti-Semite;
- armed his forces in the largest secret transfer of military equipment since Iran-Contra;
- helped draw up plans and gave the final okay for the eviction of 170,000 people from their homes?

The answer, of course, is the United States, in supervising the onslaught of President Franjo Tudjman's Croatia on the Krajina, with consequent killing and ethnic cleansing, the largest of the entire war thus far. These feats were cheered on, or at least excused, by the vast majority of liberals in Western Europe and the US.

The most ardent public supporter of Tudjman's Croatia in the US has been Senator Bob Dole. Hungry for both campaign funds and for a foreign policy card to flourish in his stumbles towards the Republican presidential nomination, Dole has become a hero to the legions of fanatic Croat nationalists who see Tudjman as a latter-day Ante Pavelic, the leader of a pro-Hitler puppet state in the Second World War. Pavelic's *Ustashe* followed the orders of the Franciscans and of Croatia's minister of the interior, Andrija Artukovic, in murdering some 700,000 Serbs, 30,000 Jews and an unknown number of gypsies, most of them in the death camp of Jasenovac.

Guiding Dole through the intricacies of Balkan politics and linking him to Tudjman's agenda has been his staff assistant Mira Baratta. This 35-year-old woman was singled out for praise from the floor of the chamber by Senator John Warner on the day in late July when Dole helped terminate the (entirely bogus) arms embargo on Bosnia.

Baratta's grandfather was a Nazi officer in Mostar, and a supporter of Pavelic. For years her father, Pero Radijelovic, ran a weekly Croat radio program in Los Angeles in which he imparted information supplied by his daughter, coyly labeled "exclusive information from a very special source". Radijelovic has hailed Pavelic as "the greatest man in Croatian history" and he acted as master of ceremonies at a banquet for Tudjman in Los Angeles. The honorary chairwoman of this event was Artukovic's widow; Artukovic himself was extradited from Los Angeles to the Yugoslav federation in the 1980s and condemned to death for war crimes. He died in prison.

The importance of Balkan money to Dole's campaign finances may be judged by the boasts of former Congressman Joseph DioGuardia at a banquet of the fiercely anti-Serb American-Albanian lobby in 1987. As reported by Mark Lupesina of the Yugoslav magazine *Interview*, DioGuardia said, "I have raised a big bundle of money for Dole's PAC." In a speech at the banquet, Dole acknowledged those present for their very substantial contributions.

Baratta guided Dole in a trip to the former Yugoslavia in 1990, and supplied him with prompts during interviews, as well as public statements such as his press release lauding Tudjman's Croatia as "an example of democratic freedom", in contrast to the "Bolshevik" government of Serbia. ■

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(Guns, continued from p. 1)
Among the "benign" items okayed by the Commerce Department:

- Air Parts International's export to Yemen of shock batons with high voltage.
- Creative Security's export of electronic stun guns to Panama.
- Criminal Research's export of shock batons to Saudi Arabia.
- Jonas Aircraft and Arms's export of saps – lead bludgeons covered with leather, and banned by most US police departments – to Egypt and shock batons to Saudi Arabia. In 1992, Jonas was accused of having illegally shipped weaponry to South Africa's apartheid regime.
- Nova Technologies's export of electronic stun guns to the Philippines.
- Premier Crown Corporation's export of twenty-six inch shock batons with hot center to Saudi Arabia.
- Smith & Wesson's export of shock batons and mace batons to both Saudi Arabia and Yemen.
- Transtechnology Corporation's export of riot shields – "with Arabic inscription" – to Yemen.
- Tri County Police's export of shock batons to Thailand.

Between 1991 and 1993, Saudi Arabia was the final destination for some $5 million worth of 0A82C exports – almost twenty per cent of total sales in that category – and the same amount in 0A84C exports. Ian Baird, Commerce's deputy assistant secretary for export administration, confirmed that last year the Department authorized the sale of Taser guns to Riyadh. The Taser shoots two darts charged with 50,000 volts of electricity, and has been linked to at least nine deaths when used by US police departments.

The Commerce Dept. approved the sale to Saudi Arabia of a gun that shoots two darts charged with 50,000 volts.

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(Guns, continued from p. 2)

The State Department's current annual human rights report says that Saudi government officials "torture and otherwise abuse detainees, including citizens and foreigners". One method of "torture" in Saudi Arabia, the State Department says, is "electronic shock", making the export of Tasers and electronic shock batons to Saudi authorities especially odious.

When asked if sending such items to the Saudis didn't raise concerns, Baird said that electronic shock batons and Tasers "have a very legitimate police purpose. It's far preferable to shooting people down". This argument would be more compelling if US firms haven't also been selling the Saudis – and many other countries – shotguns and ammunition.

Other countries which the Commerce Department has authorized to receive category 0A82C exports include Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan. 0A84C exports were sent to, among others, Brazil, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela.

Baird said that the Commerce Department has a policy of denying any request to export "specially designed implements of torture", and that within a month or so the Department will publish new regulations in the *Federal Register* which will formally ban their export. Note, though, that Commerce apparently does not consider Premier Crown Corporation's 26-inch shock baton to fall within that grouping.

While we did not find any cases of thumbscrews being exported – and Baird stated that the Commerce Department had never authorized their sale, at least during the Clinton administration – they will not be banned for export under the new guidelines, thus preserving flexibility in the licensing process and maintaining all maximum sharpness to America's competitive edge.

The human side to this business is not forgotten. At the torture schools run by the US government, such as the School of the Americas at Ft. Benning, Georgia, officers from El Salvador to Saudi Arabia and other client nations are taught all the refinement of inflicting pain and extorting information. ■

Punch Bowl

In a city seething with enmities and ancient feuds, few hatreds glow with fiercer incandescence than that between Scott Thompson and his former father-in-law, Paul Nitze. Thompson was a high-flier who went from Stanford to a Rhodes scholarship at Oxford to Reagan-era Washington as a cold war hawk. He counted Richard Perle and Edward Luttwak among his friends, and Nina Nitze, the daughter of Mr. Cold War, was his wife.

Then Thompson declared himself gay. This didn't prevent him from serving as No. 2 to Charles Wick at the US Information Agency, but it did pitch him into savage combat with the Nitze clan. Thompson, who teaches at the Fletcher School at Tufts, has now given his side of the story in *The Price of Achievement: Coming Out in Reagan Days*, published by Cassell.

There was an essential "link between [Nitze's] impotence with women in his twenties and his need to press for big missiles on America's part for the duration of his career"

According to Thompson, the Nitzes shunned no weapon, even theft, in his bitter divorce and child custody proceedings with Nina. Personal papers were plundered from Thompson's Washington home by a burglar who we are to infer was hired by the Nitzes.

Thompson certainly spares no effort to embarrass Nitze. He claims that Nitze himself has a homosexual orientation and quotes Phyllis Pratt, the Standard Oil heiress whom Nitze married in the 1930s, as telling her friends that Nitze was impotent with women. Phyllis, Thompson writes, later accused Nina of "driving Scott to homosexuality.... whereas she herself had saved Paul from homosexuality. The more I thought about it the more I realized that it was his latent homosexuality, largely suppressed from the time he advantageously committed himself to Phyllis Pratt, that was the underlying force driving this war, and that the real divorce going on was between him and me."

Thompson applies this analysis to issues of more moment than the psychodynamics of one family. For those who remember Nitze flourishing models of mighty Soviet missiles in the heyday of the Committee on the Present Danger, these words do carry a certain resonance:

"As Paul was eventually able to learn, I prepared a paper for delivery to several fora of psychiatrists and psychohistorians, a psychohistory of his life, the basis for a larger biography forthcoming. The essential part is the link that became obvious between Paul's impotence with women in his twenties and his need to press for big missiles on America's part for the duration of his career – along with his denial that we ever had enough, that ours ever counted, and that we could ever stand up to the Soviets. Whence of course his central participation in the creation of the infamous 'Missile Gap Crisis' of 1960, which Kennedy was happy enough to forget once it had done its work and he was installed in the White House, but of which Paul continued to believe a version."

Thompson's memoir is written in a frenetic, vulgar prose that is exhausting, though sometimes unintentionally comic, as when he synthesizes his own sexual divagations with the wider conflict:

"All this [his passion for someone called Mark Altbush], internally so vast, was the minutest fleck on the tide of history that whirled upon my little bubble, as the United States and the Soviet Union seemed to be moving toward their final, historic confrontation. Everything related to everything. When I gave lectures and speeches counterpunching the glacier-like Soviet encroachment, I was not just challenging the *bienpensant* orthodoxies of the decent sleepy world; I was tearing at the unconscious bonds of the whole universe of convention from which I was now desperate to escape."

This is not the first time that the psychosexual dynamics of the cold war have

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been examined, re missiles. The prime deviser of the nuclear deterrence theory at RAND in the Fifties was Bernard Brodie. He formulated concepts of "nuclear exchange", "escalation" and "mutual assured destruction" in between sessions with his psychoanalyst.

Sweatshop Czarina's Bouquets From Hillary

Hillary Clinton delivered a fiery speech at the United Nations women's summit in Peking on the plight of Chinese women in their native country. But when it comes to mistreatment of Chinese women in the United States, the First Lady's feminist zeal abruptly disappears. **Ajantha Subramanian** sends us this report:

Despite the protests of an Asian women's group, Hillary Clinton accepted an invitation to give the keynote speech at a September 20 ceremony honoring a notorious employer of sweatshop labor.

The "Gala Art of Achievement Awards", sponsored jointly by *Working Woman* magazine and the National Foundation for Women Business Owners, pays homage to the top 50 US businesswomen. On this year's list was Jessica McClintock, a dress manufacturer and also the target of a three-year boycott waged by the Garment Workers Justice Campaign and the Asian Immigrant Women's Advocates (AIWA). They charge that McClintock has refused to pay back wages to 20 Chinese immigrant women who sewed party and prom dresses for her company.

The women were employed by one of McClintock's subcontractors, Lucky Sewing Company of Oakland, California, where they worked 10-12 hours a day. They received no vacation time, overtime or health benefits and earned piece rate wages – $5 for a McClintock designer dress that fetches $175 in stores.

In 1992, Lucky Sewing declared bankruptcy, leaving the women not only jobless but also holding more than $15,000 in bounced paychecks. After long claiming that she had no legal obligation to the workers, McClintock – whose firm racked up $145 million in profits last year – recently changed her position. Though still refusing to negotiate with AIWA, she has agreed to pay $2,000 to each worker who signs a written statement absolving her of responsibility for their unpaid wages and stating that the money represents charity. Meanwhile, McClintock has obtained a court order restricting the women from picketing her business premises.

Working Woman and the Foundation for Women Business Owners rejected the demand of the Asian Immigrant Women's Advocates that McClintock be removed from the list of awardees. They explained blandly that the awards are based solely on profits and have nothing to do with social responsibility. Their one concession was to edit Jessica McClintock out of a videotape highlighting the awardees' successes, which was shown at the gala affair.

Working Woman and the National Foundation for Women Business Owners pretend to champion "working women". Their preference is for women CEOs whose firms buy advertising space in the former or contribute money to the latter.

Hillary Clinton responded to protests by the Asian Immigrant Women's Advocates by summoning the Labor Department's Women's Bureau to help re-write her speech. She refused to criticize McClintock directly. The most she would do was insert emollient language regarding the sad plight of low-wage workers.

Some 60 people protested the awards ceremony at the DC Capitol Hilton. According to AIWA's Stacy Kono, "All we want is for Jessica McClintock to sit down with the workers and negotiate a fair settlement." One woman making her way into the ceremony offered protesters an alternative solution: "Why don't you just work harder?"

Navasky's First Amendment

"It is in the nature of the journal of opinion – left, right and far right – to question the powers that be, to cast an independent eye on the ideas and inhabitants of the conventional center ... Independent political commentary requires independence and with it the freest possible play to test ideas, exercise the power of reason, and make the case for the importance of moral argument."

– Victor Navasky, *The New York Times*, Sept. 24, 1995, in op-ed article criticizing Rupert Murdoch, "the enemy of independence".

"Alex, you are, as always a joy to read and at a time when we are reconsidering every aspect of the magazine including space allocations, our preference is to maintain you in your current privileged position. But, as you may gather from the guidelines, we are unenthusiastic about devoting any serious space (even when arguably deserved) to bashing our allies on the liberal left, given the fact (as hordes of callers and readers increasingly remind us) that the near right, the far right, the neo-right and the Christian right are already doing much of that job, albeit from their own warped perspective, and are very much in the saddle (not least because a weary DLC-oriented administration and its neo-lib supporters seems reluctant to take them on)."

– Letter from *Nation* editorial director Victor Navasky and *Nation* editor Katrina vanden Heuvel to Alexander Cockburn, August 7, 1995.

Exocet Subsidizes *George*

John F. Kennedy Jr.'s new magazine, *George*, launched its career last month, graced with a photo of Cindy Crawford on its cover. It contained 175 pages of advertising, a record for a new magazine.

George's publisher is Hachette Filipacchi Magazines, the biggest magazine company in the world. Hachette in turn is owned by the Lagardere Groupe of France, which is headed by Jean-Luc Lagardere. In addition to publishing, Lagardere's firms make weaponry, including the Exocet missile.

Recall that it was the Exocet which almost allowed the Argentine air force to defeat the British in the war for the Falkland Islands. Lagardere has sold this product to customers including Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia.

So every time Lagardere sells another Exocet, his company will be better able to spare the $20 million it's expected to sink into *George*. ■

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The Wold Bank's Refugee Romeo

The World Bank's annual meeting is about to get underway and Bank flacks are flooding the media with stories about the institution's ongoing transformation into a friend of the Third World poor and the global environment. But Bank officials are not keen to discuss the activities of one of its newest employees, Jose Cordoba Montoya.

Just a few years ago, Montoya was one of the most powerful men in Mexico, Carlos Salinas's chief of staff and generalissimo of Mexico's war on drugs. He met regularly with US officials, and received the usual hosannas for being a dashing "free-market reformer".

But Montoya was forced to resign after he was linked to the March, 1994 murder of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the ruling party's presidential candidate.

Montoya resigned after he was linked to the murder of Luis Donaldo Colosio, but now makes $1,000 per day from the World Bank.

Earlier this year he suffered fresh humiliation when wiretaps conducted by Mexico's intelligence agency and leaked to the press revealed that Montoya ("my little pirate") had been carrying on a torrid affair with Marcela ("my little dear") Bodenstedt – former cop, ex-television announcer, and alleged associate of members of the Garcia Abregon drug cartel.

After he was tied to the Colosio murder, Montoya was shunted off to the Inter-American Development Bank. But when his presence there became an embarrassment to the IADB, the refugee had to hit the streets once more.

Montoya was quickly offered asylum by the World Bank, and now earns the princely sum of $1,000 per day as a consultant. We called Bank spokesman Mario del Castilla to ask what Montoya was doing to earn his keep. Not surprisingly, Castilla would not discuss the matter. ■

Pecksniff's Progress

Carter's Zaire Con

One of the great mysteries of our age is why ex-President Jimmy Carter is held in such high regard. *The Nation* ran a story on him a few years back, hailing the man from Plains as "The Very Model of an Ex-President".

Here is a man who while in office introduced Cold War II and what later came to be known as Reaganomics. As a roving diplomat in recent years he has occasionally performed useful service, but more often than not his work has served to bolster a variety of dictators.

Amid burning admiration – as he later confessed – for Yanick Cedras, wife of Haiti's bloodthirsty General Raul Cedras, Carter forced concessions on Jean-Bertrand Aristide before the latter's return to Haiti as president. Cedras himself received an invitation to teach the Bible to Carter's Sunday School class in Georgia. Carter once served as an election observer in Ghana and duly certified a rigged balloting conducted by "President" Jerry Rawlings, a favorite of the US government and the International Monetary Fund.

Carter's latest project is to give aid and comfort to one of the world's most corrupt and ruthless tyrants, Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko. His efforts in this regard have the backing of the Clinton administration and the United Nations.

Mobutu, who has stolen some $5 billion since taking power in a CIA sponsored coup in 1965, has been isolated politically since protests rocked Kinshasa, the capital, four years ago. Though he has a friend installed as prime minister – Kengo Wa Dondo – Mobutu no longer exercises iron-clad control of the army or of the national treasury. Despite discreet support from France and the US, most notably the former, Mobutu is an international pariah (see **CounterPunch**, Vol. 1, No. 14).

However, Mobutu's room to maneuver has greatly increased due to the crises in Burundi and especially in Rwanda. Millions of people from the latter country fled across the border into Zaire following the civil war that erupted in early 1994. The UN has paid Mobutu about $15 million to run refugee camps for the Rwandans, even as Zairian troops have committed terrible abuses against the camp's inhabitants.

Mobutu has also allowed Hutu military officials, perpetrators of genocide against Rwanda's minority Tutsis, to control the camps. His army has been supplying the Hutus with training, weapons and military bases as they prepare to return to war against the new government in Rwanda.

Organizations in Washington which track central African affairs, including human rights groups, relief organizations and ruling elite forums like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Global Coalition on Africa – the latter headed by George Bush's former assistant secretary of state Herman Cohen – have become alarmed by the situation on the Rwanda-Zaire border. There has been a consensus that Mobutu is a large factor in destabilizing the region.

The Atlanta-based Carter Center has been holding a series of panel discussions on the situation in Rwanda, and has invited members of these groups for the stated purpose of hearing suggestions

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on how best to put the heat on Mobutu. Yet all along, the people from Washington have had a sense of unease about the Carter crew and the true nature of its agenda. "Carter's people have been seeking to extract as much information as possible [from us], trying to find out what our strategy will be," one person tells us. "But everyone has suspected that Carter was trying to get them on board for his own plan to rehabilitate Mobutu."

Such fears are now confirmed. Carter, it turns out, opened secret discussions with Mobutu at least as far back as June. His contacts with the tyrant were not revealed to the groups in Washington. "People were worried that Hank Cohen might be talking to Mobutu and revealing details of our strategy", says our informant, "but it was Carter who turned out to be the double agent."

Carter's duplicity extends beyond talk. Since July, with Carter's knowledge and approval, Henri Damas, a Cameroonian businessman and emissary of Mobutu's, has been lobbying in Washington on the dictator's behalf. Damas has met with the Congressional Black Caucus, with figures from the Israeli lobby – Israel is a long-time Mobutu ally, having trained his presidential guard – and with Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. Carter has also eased communication between Mobutu and Clinton administration officials, as well as with Boutros Ghali, director general of the UN.

Further details of Carter's maneuvers have been revealed by the French newspaper, *Liberation*, which has reported that Carter sent Mobutu a fawning letter on August 3, saying that the dictator's "contribution can be essential to find a peaceful solution" to the Rwanda crisis. Many people were looking for answers, Carter wrote, but without the benefit of "a leader as influential and informed as you".

Carter urged Mobutu to endorse eight points – points which he had drawn up based on suggestions offered by the groups in Washington – including the prevention of military incursions from Zaire into Rwanda, the arrest of Hutu extremists and better protection of Rwandan refugees at the camps in Zaire. He suggested that he would support Mobutu in presidential elections to be held next year if Mobutu cooperated.

Carter wrote to Mobutu that the help of "a leader as influential as you" was essential to solving the Rwanda crisis.

From his vacation mansion in Portugal, Mobutu responded the following day: "To all of your questions I give you a resounding 'yes'...Help me to define my next actions."

On August 6, two representatives of the Carter Center, Marion Creekmore and Vince Farley, were dispatched to Portugal to meet with Mobutu. As we go to press, a meeting in Portugal between Carter and the dictator is expected.

Asked why the groups in Washington would object if Carter was merely seeking to get Mobutu to adhere to their own agenda, our informant says: "Mobutu can say he's going to help, but he hasn't kept any of his promises. And the only reason he's in a position to help is because he's complicit in all of the problems, which Carter deliberately ignores." Indeed, on August 19, less than two weeks after he gave his "resounding 'yes'" to Carter, Mobutu's troops expelled 13,000 refugees from camps in Goma, Zaire.

On September 20, Carter wrote an op-ed piece for the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution*, in which he suggested that Mobutu be recruited to help solve the problems in Burundi and Rwanda. "All the leaders [in the region] tell me that Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko could play a key role if he were included in a concerted international effort", Carter wrote, "but because of human rights violations and a lack of progress towards democracy in Zaire, Mobutu is almost universally condemned and ostracized by American and other western officials."

With matchless effrontery, after concealing his contacts with Mobutu for months, Carter finally informed the groups in Washington in September that he intended to meet the dictator. Did they have any suggestions? ■

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